

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1.-31. (canceled)

32. (Currently amended) A method of providing an indication of whether an input name matches a known name, the method comprising:

accessing ~~an~~ a text input name entered as an input name by one or more of a user or a system;

determining multiple phonetic representations for a portion of the text input name, each of the multiple phonetic representations being for a different pronunciation of the text input name;

comparing each of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the text input name to a phonetic representation of a portion of ~~the~~ a text known name stored in a database; and

providing an indication of whether the text input name matches the text known name based on the comparing.

33. (Currently amended) The method of claim 32 further comprising:  
classifying the text input name as belonging to a particular culture;  
selecting a rule based on the classifying of the text input name; and  
applying the rule in determining the multiple phonetic representations for the portion of the text input name.

34. (Currently amended) The method of claim 32 further comprising:  
classifying the text input name as belonging to a particular culture;

selecting multiple rules based on the classifying of the text input name; and  
applying the multiple rules in determining the multiple phonetic representations for the  
portion of the text input name.

35. (Currently amended) The method of claim 32 wherein:  
comparing each of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the text input  
name to the phonetic representation of the portion of the text known name comprises  
determining articulatory similarity between at least one of the multiple phonetic representations  
of the portion of the text input name and the phonetic representation of the portion of the text  
known name, and  
providing the indication comprises providing an indication of articulatory similarity  
between the text input name and the text known name, the indication of articulatory similarity  
being based on the determining of articulatory similarity.

36. (Currently amended) The method of claim 35 further comprising:  
identifying an articulatory variation between (i) one or more of the multiple phonetic  
representations of the portion of the text input name and (ii) the phonetic representation of the  
portion of the text known name; and  
classifying the articulatory variation as likely or unlikely, and  
wherein determining articulatory similarity comprises attributing less significance to the  
articulatory variation, so as to indicate greater articulatory similarity, if the articulatory variation  
is likely than if the articulatory variation is unlikely.

37. (Previously presented) The method of claim 35 wherein determining articulatory  
similarity comprises determining articulatory similarity based on a culture-specific rule.

38. (Currently amended) The method of claim 35 wherein:

determining articulatory similarity between at least one of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the text input name and the phonetic representation of the portion of the text known name comprises determining, for the at least one of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the text input name, how many phonetic features are in common between corresponding portions of the at least one phonetic representation of the portion of the text input name and the phonetic representation of the portion of the text known name, and

providing the indication of articulatory similarity comprises providing an indication that is based on the determining of how many phonetic features are in common.

39. (Currently amended) The method of claim 38 wherein:

the at least one phonetic representation of the portion of the text input name comprises an International Phonetic Alphabet ("IPA") representation of the text input name,

the phonetic representation of the portion of the text known name comprises an IPA representation of the portion of the text known name, and

determining how many phonetic features are in common between corresponding portions of the at least one phonetic representation of the portion of the text input name and the phonetic representation of the portion of the text known name comprises determining how many phonetic features are in common between corresponding symbols from the IPA representation of the portion of the text input name and the IPA representation of the portion of the text known name.

40. (Currently amended) The method of claim 39 wherein determining how many phonetic features are in common between corresponding symbols from the IPA representation of the portion of the text input name and the IPA representation of the portion of the text known name is based on a culture-specific rule.

41. (Previously presented) The method of claim 32 wherein determining multiple phonetic representations comprises determining multiple representations that are each based on an IPA.

42. (Currently amended) The method of claim 32 further comprising comparing each of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the text input name to a second phonetic representation of the portion of the text known name.

43. (Currently amended) The method of claim 32 wherein accessing the text input name comprises accessing a character representation of the text input name.

44. (Previously presented) The method of claim 43 wherein determining multiple phonetic representations comprises using a rule relating character representations to sounds.

45. (Currently amended) The method of claim 43 wherein:  
the character representation of the text input name reflects a spelling from a specific culture, and  
determining multiple phonetic representations comprises using a rule for determining phonetic representations, the rule being based on the specific culture.

46. (Currently amended) The method of claim 43 wherein:  
the character representation of the text input name reflects a spelling from a specific culture,  
the text input name belongs to another culture that is different from the specific culture, and  
determining multiple phonetic representations comprises using a rule for determining phonetic representations, the rule being based on the specific culture.

47. (Currently amended) The method of claim 43 wherein:  
the character representation of the text input name reflects a spelling from a specific culture,  
the text input name belongs to another culture that is different from the specific culture,  
and  
determining multiple phonetic representations comprises using a rule for determining phonetic representations, the rule being based on the other culture.

48. (Currently amended) The method of claim 43 wherein:  
the character representation of the text input name reflects a spelling from a specific culture,  
the text input name belongs to the specific culture, and  
determining multiple phonetic representations comprises using a rule for determining phonetic representations, the rule being based on the specific culture.

49. (Currently amended) The method of claim 32 wherein providing the indication comprises providing an indication that the text input name exactly matches the text known name.

50. (Currently amended) The method of claim 32 wherein providing the indication comprises providing an indication that the text input name does not exactly match the text known name.

51. (Currently amended) The method of claim 32 wherein comparing each of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the text input name to the phonetic representation of the portion of the text known name comprises comparing, for at least one of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the text input name, corresponding parts of (i) the at least one phonetic representation of the portion of the text input name and (ii) the phonetic representation of the portion of the text known name.

52. (Previously presented) The method of claim 51 wherein the corresponding parts include parts that correspond at a syntactic level

53. (Previously presented) The method of claim 51 wherein the corresponding parts include parts that correspond at a syllabic level.

54. (Currently amended) The method of claim 53 wherein the parts that correspond at the syllabic level include (i) a first part that relates to a left-most syllable of the portion of the text input name and (ii) a second part that relates to a left-most syllable of the portion of the text known name.

55. (Currently amended) The method of claim 54 wherein:  
the first part further relates to both an initial phonologic element and a final phonologic element of the left-most syllable of the portion of the text input name, and  
the second part further relates to an initial phonologic element and a final phonologic element of the left-most syllable of the portion of the text known name.

56. (Currently amended) The method of claim 55 further comprising:  
producing a result from the comparing of the first part and the second part; and  
determining, based on the result, whether to continue comparing the at least one of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the text input name and the phonetic representation of the portion of the text known name.

57. (Previously presented) The method of claim 51 wherein the corresponding parts include parts that correspond at a morphologic level.

58. (Previously presented) The method of claim 51 wherein the corresponding parts include parts that correspond at a phonologic level.

59. (Currently amended) The method of claim 58 wherein the parts that correspond at the phonologic level include (i) a first part that relates to a final phoneme of the portion of the text input name and (ii) a second part that relates to a final phoneme of the portion of the text known name.

60. (Currently amended) The method of claim 32 wherein comparing each of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the text input name to the phonetic representation of the portion of the text known name comprises comparing, for at least one of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the text input name, sonority level between at least part of (i) the at least one of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the text input name and (ii) the phonetic representation of the portion of the text known name.

61. (Currently amended) The method of claim 32 wherein providing the indication of whether the text input name matches the text known name comprises providing a rank-ordered list of names, with rank-order indicating a likelihood of matching the text input name.

62. (Currently amended) The method of claim 61 wherein providing the rank-ordered list of names comprises ranking names on the rank-ordered list based on a degree of articulatory similarity between names on the rank-ordered list and the text input name.

63. (Currently amended) The method of claim 61 wherein the rank-ordered list of names includes the text known name.

64. (Currently amended) The method of claim 63 wherein providing the rank-ordered list comprises:

comparing, for at least one of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the text input name, sonority level between at least part of (i) the at least one of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the text input name and (ii) the phonetic representation of the portion of the text known name, and

basing rank-order of the text known name on the comparing of sonority level.

65. (Currently amended) The method of claim 63 wherein providing the rank-ordered list comprises:

determining whether the text known name includes a morphological element, and

basing rank-order of the text known name on whether the text known name includes a morphological element.

66. (Currently amended) The method of claim 63 wherein providing the rank-ordered list comprises:

comparing, for at least one of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the text input name, (i) an initial sound of the at least one of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the text input name and (ii) an initial sound of the phonetic representation of the portion of the text known name, and

basing rank-order of the text known name on the comparing of initial sounds.

67. (Currently amended) The method of claim 63 wherein providing the rank-ordered list comprises:

comparing, for at least one of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the text input name, syllabic structure of (i) the at least one of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the text input name and (ii) the phonetic representation of the portion of the text known name, and

basing rank-order of the text known name on the comparing of syllabic structure.



68. (Previously presented) The method of claim 67 wherein comparing syllabic structure comprises comparing syllabic similarity.

69. (Currently amended) The method of claim 63 wherein providing the rank-ordered list comprises:

comparing, for at least one of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the text input name, location of stress in (i) the at least one of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the text input name and (ii) the phonetic representation of the portion of the text known name, and

basing rank-order of the text known name on the comparing of location of stress.

70. (Currently amended) The method of claim 63 wherein providing the rank-ordered list comprises:

comparing, for at least one of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the text input name, orthographic similarity between (i) the at least one of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the text input name and (ii) the phonetic representation of the portion of the text known name, and

basing rank-order of the text known name on the comparing of orthographic similarity.

71. (Currently amended) The method of claim 32 wherein comparing each of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the text input name to the phonetic representation of the portion of the text known name comprises discounting, for at least one of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the text input name, an occurrence of a likely articulatory variation between the at least one of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the text input name and the phonetic representation of the portion of the text known name.

72. (Currently amended) The method of claim 32 further comprising:

identifying a particle in the text input name; and  
attributing less significance to the particle, than to another part of the text input name, in  
providing the indication of whether the text input name matches the text known name.

73. (Previously presented) The method of claim 72 wherein attributing less  
significance to the particle comprises deciding not to determine a phonetic representation of the  
particle.

74. (Currently amended) The method of claim 72 wherein attributing less  
significance to the particle comprises deciding not to compare a phonetic representation of the  
particle to a phonetic representation of a part of the text known name.

75. (Previously presented) The method of claim 72 wherein identifying a particle  
comprises identifying a title, affix, or qualifier as the particle.

76. (Currently amended) The method of claim 32 wherein accessing ~~an~~ the text input  
name comprises accessing a portion of a complete name.

77. (Currently amended) The method of claim 32 wherein the portion of the text  
input name comprises the entire text input name.

78. (Currently amended) An apparatus comprising a computer readable storage  
medium having instructions stored thereon that when executed by a machine result in at least the  
following:

accessing ~~an~~ a text input name entered as an input name by one or more of a user or a  
system;

determining multiple phonetic representations for a portion of the text input name, each of the multiple phonetic representations being for a different pronunciation of the text input name;

comparing each of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the text input name to a phonetic representation of a portion of ~~the~~ a text known name stored in a database; and

providing an indication of whether the text input name matches the text known name based on the comparing.

79. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 78 wherein the instructions, when executed by a machine, further result in at least the following:

classifying the text input name as belonging to a particular culture;  
selecting a rule based on the classifying of the text input name; and  
applying the rule in determining the multiple phonetic representations for the portion of the text input name.

80. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 78 wherein the instructions, when executed by a machine, further result in at least the following:

classifying the text input name as belonging to a particular culture;  
selecting multiple rules based on the classifying of the text input name; and  
applying the multiple rules in determining the multiple phonetic representations for the portion of the text input name.

81. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 78 wherein:

comparing each of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the text input name to the phonetic representation of the portion of the text known name comprises  
determining articulatory similarity between at least one of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the text input name and the phonetic representation of the portion of the text known name, and

providing the indication comprises providing an indication of articulatory similarity between the text input name and the text known name, the indication of articulatory similarity being based on the determining of articulatory similarity.

82. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 81 wherein the instructions, when executed by a machine, further result in at least the following:

identifying an articulatory variation between (i) one or more of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the text input name and (ii) the phonetic representation of the portion of the text known name; and

classifying the articulatory variation as likely or unlikely, and

wherein determining articulatory similarity comprises attributing less significance to the articulatory variation, so as to indicate greater articulatory similarity, if the articulatory variation is likely than if the articulatory variation is unlikely.

83. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 81 wherein determining articulatory similarity comprises determining articulatory similarity based on a culture-specific rule.

84. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 81 wherein:

determining articulatory similarity between at least one of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the text input name and the phonetic representation of the portion of the text known name comprises determining, for the at least one of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the text input name, how many phonetic features are in common between corresponding portions of the at least one phonetic representation of the portion of the text input name and the phonetic representation of the portion of the text known name, and

providing the indication of articulatory similarity comprises providing an indication that is based on the determining of how many phonetic features are in common.

85. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 84 wherein:  
the at least one phonetic representation of the portion of the text input name comprises an International Phonetic Alphabet ("IPA") representation of the text input name,  
the phonetic representation of the portion of the text known name comprises an IPA representation of the portion of the text known name, and  
determining how many phonetic features are in common between corresponding portions of the at least one phonetic representation of the portion of the text input name and the phonetic representation of the portion of the text known name comprises determining how many phonetic features are in common between corresponding symbols from the IPA representation of the portion of the text input name and the IPA representation of the portion of the text known name.

86. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 85 wherein determining how many phonetic features are in common between corresponding symbols from the IPA representation of the portion of the text input name and the IPA representation of the portion of the text known name is based on a culture-specific rule.

87. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 78 wherein determining multiple phonetic representations comprises determining multiple representations that are each based on an IPA.

88. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 78 wherein the instructions, when executed by a machine, further result in comparing each of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the text input name to a second phonetic representation of the portion of the text known name.

89. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 78 wherein comparing each of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the text input name to the phonetic

representation of the portion of the text known name comprises comparing, for at least one of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the text input name, corresponding parts of (i) the at least one phonetic representation of the portion of the text input name and (ii) the phonetic representation of the portion of the text known name.

90. (Previously presented) The apparatus of claim 89 wherein the corresponding parts include parts that correspond at a syllabic level.

91. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 90 wherein the parts that correspond at the syllabic level include (i) a first part that relates to a left-most syllable of the portion of the text input name and (ii) a second part that relates to a left-most syllable of the portion of the text known name.

92. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 78 wherein comparing each of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the text input name to the phonetic representation of the portion of the text known name comprises comparing, for at least one of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the text input name, sonority level between at least part of (i) the at least one of the multiple phonetic representations of the portion of the text input name and (ii) the phonetic representation of the portion of the text known name.

93. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 78 wherein providing the indication of whether the text input name matches the text known name comprises providing a rank-ordered list of names, with rank-order indicating a likelihood of matching the text input name.

94. (Currently amended) The apparatus of claim 93 wherein providing the rank-ordered list of names comprises ranking names on the rank-ordered list based on a degree of articulatory similarity between names on the rank-ordered list and the text input name.